

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJECT: BUENOS AIRES HERALD ATTACKS NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL

1. BUENOS AIRES HERALD RAN EDITORIAL MAY 31 CALLING MAY 25 NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL ON ARGENTINA "SLANDEROUS" AND "HIGHLY IRRESPONSIBLE" BECAUSE ITS "DRAMATIC BUT ABSURD SCENARIO ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA TODAY" APPARENTLY WAS BASED ON INFORMATION APPEARING IN THE APRIL 29 ISSUE OF THE LONDON BASED WEEKLY NEWSLETTER "LATIN AMERICA POLITICAL REPORT". HERALD PARTICULARLY ZEROED IN ON NY TIMES' LIFTING FROM NEWSLETTER QUOTE (OR MISQUOTE AS THE CASE MAY BE) ATTRIBUTED TO BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR GENERAL IBERICO SAINT JEAN, AS FOLLOWS: "FIRST WE WILL KILL ALL THE SUBVERSIVES; THEN WE WILL KILL THEIR COLLABORATORS; THEN... THEIR SYMPATHIZERS; THEN... THOSE WHO REMAIN INDIFFERENT; AND FINALLY, WE WILL KILL THOSE WHO ARE TIMID." HERALD, WHICH DID NOT REPRINT THE QUOTE ITSELF, CAST STRONG DOUBT ON ITS AUTHENTICITY, STATING THAT SUCH HEARSAY INFORMATION WAS STANDARD STOCK IN TRADE OF "DUBIOUS" LATIN AMERICA NEWSLETTER. HERALD RECOGNIZED THAT TIMES EDITORIAL WRITER MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED TO SLANDER GENERAL SAINT JEAN, BUT NEVERTHELESS SHOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE TAKEN IN BY A PUBLICATION "NOT NOTED FOR ITS ACCURACY OR ITS MODERATE POLITICAL VIEWS", PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF FACT THAT THE QUOTE ORIGINATED IN "A SO-CALLED HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN SPAIN WHICH IS MERELY

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A FRONT ORGANIZATION FOR LEFTWING SUBVERSION." (QUOTE EVIDENTLY COMES FROM THE FRONTISPIECE OF A BOOK PUBLISHED BY CADHU IN SPAIN.) HERALD LAMENTED THAT SOME PEOPLE MIGHT GET IMPRESSION FROM THIS "UNPLEASANT AFFAIR...THAT THERE TRULY IS A CONSPIRACY AGAINST ARGENTINA ABROAD AND THAT THE NEW YORK TIMES IS PART OF IT." HERALD CALLED SUCH A CONCLUSION "RUBBISH" AND THEN WENT ON TO DONDEMN THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE AND FACT THAT NO NEWSPAPER

IN ARGENTINA DARED TO REPRINT THE TIMES EDITORIAL OUT OF FEAR, ALTHOUGH ITS CONTENT HAS BEEN WIDELY CIRCULATED BY WAY OF MOUTH. REST OF EDITORIAL IS CALL FOR NEW POLICY OF TRUTH BY PRESS AND GOVERNMENT TO COUNTER LEFTIST PROPAGANDA.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT HERALD'S REACTION TO NY TIMES EDITORIAL IS BASED LARGELY ON VIEW, WHICH IS SHARED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN

PRESS CORPS HERE, THAT "LATIN AMERICA'S" PRINCIPAL FIGURE CHRISTOPHER ROPER IS AN AGENT PROVOCATEUR IN THE SERVICE OF THE MON-TEROS AND OTHER LEFTWING TERRORISTS. BASED ON ROPER'S PAST TRACK RECORD AND THE QUESTIONABLE NATURE OF THE ALLEGED QUOTE, THE FEELING IS THAT "LATIN AMERICA" PROBABLY INVENTED SAINT JEAN QUOTE OUT OF WHOLE CLOTH. NEVERTHELESS WE ARE SURPRISED BY THE INTENSITY OF THE HERALD EDITORIAL, WHICH IN PART MAY BE IN RESPONSE TO REACTIONS AROUSED IN GOA BY TIMES EDITORIAL. EXCEPT FOR THE ISSUE OF THE ST. JEAN QUOTE AND ITS AUTHENTICITY, WE FOUND THE NY TIMES EDITORIAL UNOBJECTIONABLE AND, INDEED, PARALLELING OUR OWN VIEWS ABOUT CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE AND NEED TO SUPPORT VIDELA.

3. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT OUTSIDE THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY THAT IN THE HEAT OF THE BITTER ANTI-INSURGENCY STRUGGLE THERE ARE SECURITY OFFICIALS WHO MIGHT UTTER, AT LEAST TO EACH OTHER IN UNGUARDED MOMENTS OR FOR RHETORICAL PURPOSES, SENTIMENTS AS EXTREME AS THAT WHICH "LATIN AMERICA" HAS ATTRIBUTED TO SAINT JEAN. HOWEVER, WE HAVE FOUND NO RESPONSIBLE JOURNALIST WHO BELIEVES THAT SAINT JEAN ACTUALLY EVER MADE THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. HERALD EDITOR BOB COX TOLD US THAT HE BELIEVED THE QUOTE WAS APOCRYPHAL AND TOTALLY INVENTED BY "LATIN AMERICA." COX DID CONFIRM THAT GOA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AUTHORITIES ARE VERY UPSET ABOUT THE TIMES EDITORIAL PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF ITS REPRINTING OF THE QUOTE, WHICH, HE SAID, HAS DEFINITELY TOUCHED A RAW NERVE.
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